

## Winter Safety and Heating Tips

### Help Avoid Hypothermia

**Cold weather can put us at risk of hypothermia**, a dangerous condition caused by a lowering of body temperature. Symptoms include feeling very cold, tired and weak; shivering and confusion.

To help avoid hypothermia:

**Wear a hat** indoors, outdoors, even in bed. Half of our body heat is lost through the head and neck.

**Dress and sleep in layers** to help insulate you. If you lower the thermostat at night, add layers of blankets, quilts, etc. to keep warm.

**Eat and drink right.** Food is fuel for the body. Nutritious meals help keep your "body furnace" going. Avoid alcohol, as it speeds up the loss of body heat.

**Know your medications** as some can increase your risk of hypothermia. Talk to your health care provider.

### Consider Heating Safety

Have your heating system and chimney, flues and vents checked once a year by a professional and purchase a carbon monoxide (CO) detector for your home.

When using supplemental heat sources such as space heaters and fireplaces, always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

For wood fireplaces, visit the U.S. Fire Administration's Web site at [usfa.dhs.gov](http://usfa.dhs.gov).

Always ensure you are heating your home efficiently: compare your energy cost for the appliance or fireplace versus the cost to use your furnace or boiler.

Have a plan in place in case you lose your home heating source. Stay elsewhere until your heat is restored or use a supplemental heating source. **Never use a stove, oven or candles as a heat source.**

If you use a generator:

- Operate your generator outdoors in a clean, dry, well-ventilated area.
- Make sure all electrical connections comply with National Electric Code.
- Never connect a generator to an existing wiring system without an automatic transfer switch.
- Never overload your generator with too many appliances.
- Never let children play near a generator.
- Read our Emergency Generator Safety brochure at [rge.com](http://rge.com), click on "Usage and Safety," "Electrical Safety" and then on "Generator Safety."



## Facing an Energy Emergency?

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federal grant program that provides financial assistance to eligible households (see right) and can be used to pay heating bills or other energy-related emergencies. The HEAP season has begun, so apply online at [otda.ny.gov/main/programs/heap](http://otda.ny.gov/main/programs/heap) or contact your county's Department of Social Services.

**With HEAP comes EAP** > RG&E's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to help eligible customers gain control of their energy bills. The program has two levels of assistance: EAP Basic Benefit (monthly bill credit) and EAP Limited Benefit (arrear forgiveness).

Space in the arrears forgiveness benefit is limited. Applications will be sent to qualified customers as openings occur.

EAP monthly bill credits are available automatically to any customer who has a HEAP grant applied directly to an active RG&E account. If HEAP is supplied to another fuel vendor you must provide us with a copy of your HEAP award letter.

**HAVING TROUBLE PAYING YOUR RG&E BILLS?** Don't wait, contact us at **1.877.266.3492** – together we can work on a solution.

### Income Eligibility Guidelines for HEAP

Household Size	Monthly Income (gross)
1	\$2,129
2	\$2,784
3	\$3,439
4	\$4,094
5	\$4,749
6	\$5,404
7	\$5,527
8	\$5,650
9	\$5,773
10	\$5,896
11	\$6,029

# Test Your Energy IQ

By using energy wisely, you can better manage your energy costs while maintaining the comfort of your home and help protect the environment. Test your energy IQ with the following quiz:

## WHAT IS YOUR THERMOSTAT SETTING?

- In winter during the day if your setting is:  
 68° or less, score 6 points     69°, score 5 points  
 70°, score 4 points     71°, score 3 points  
 72°, score 2 points     73°, score 1 point  
 74° or more, score 0 points    **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- On winter nights if your setting is:  
 60° or less, score 10 points     61°, score 9 points  
 62°, score 8 points     63°, score 7 points  
 64°, score 6 points     65°, score 5 points  
 66° or more, score 0 points    **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

## IS YOUR HOUSE DRAFTY?

To check drafts, hold a tissue where windows and doors meet their frames.

- If the tissue doesn't move, there is no draft around your windows, score 10 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- If there is no draft around your doors, score 5 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- If you keep your fireplace or woodstove damper closed to block the air flow when it's not in use, score 6 points. (Score 6 points if you have no fireplace.) **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- If you have storm windows or high-efficiency, insulating windows, score 10 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- If you have storm doors or a vestibule, score 5 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

## IS YOUR HOUSE INSULATED?

- If you have 6 inches or more in your attic, score 20 points. If you have 2 to 4 inches, score 10 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- If all exterior walls are insulated, score 10 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

## IS YOUR FLOOR INSULATED?

- If there is an unheated space under your house and your floor is insulated, score 10 points. If you have a heated basement and the basement walls are insulated, score 10 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

## SPACE AND WATER HEATING

- Depending on your heating system, score 6 points if your heating system was serviced since last winter or you regularly change filters on your forced air system or you clean baseboard units on your baseboard heating system. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_
- If the water heater temperature setting is 120° or lower, score 6 points. If above 120°, score 0 points. **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

► **NOW ADD LINES 1 – 12 TO GET YOUR QUICK QUIZ TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

### What Your Score Means

**84 or above:** Congratulations! You're making energy-wise decisions. To further control costs, look at the age and ENERGY STAR® rating of your appliances.

**70 to 83 points:** Review the areas where your score was lower and visit [rge.com](http://rge.com) (click on "Using Energy Wisely" under the "Usage and Safety" heading).

**69 or under:** There's room for improvement. Look at the quiz again. The areas you scored the fewest points may be the best places to start.

# Choose Your Way to Pay

Our online services and self service phone line are available 24/7. Try any of these **free** and **convenient** ways to pay:

- >> Enroll in our **electronic funds transfer** (EFT) service by completing the form on the back of your bill payment stub or **enroll online** (visit [rge.com](http://rge.com) and click on "Your Account" and then on "Enroll in Electronic Funds Transfer"). With EFT, RG&E will deduct your amount due from your bank account 23 days after we mail your bill.
- >> Go paper-free with our **e-Bill** service – save stamps, checks and paper. You can combine EFT and e-Bill to ensure you never miss a payment.
- >> Use our **e-Payment** service to make a secure electronic payment from your checking account while still receiving a paper bill. Pay online at [rge.com](http://rge.com) or by calling our self service line at **1.800.295.7323** – no enrollment or login needed.

